

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An apparatus for handling filter disks, the apparatus comprising:

a center post member having first and second end portions;

an attachment ~~means~~~~member~~ operatively connected to the first end portion of the center post member, the attachment ~~means~~~~member~~ including means for facilitating the lifting of at least one filter disks from a first position to a second position, wherein the attachment means has an outside dimension which is smaller than a central aperture formed in the at least one filter disk, thereby allowing the at least one filter disk to be slid over the attachment means such that apparatus is separated from the at least one filter disk by sliding the apparatus out from the at least one filter disk; and

an adapter member, operatively connected to the second end portion of the center post member, ~~the adapter member~~for supporting the at least one filter disk which when the at least one filter disk is operatively positioned relative to the center post member~~apparatus.~~

2. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

a lifting device operatively connected to the attachment member for vertically raising the handling apparatus such that the at least one filter disk can be transported from the first position to the second position.

3. (original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the lifting device comprises:

a motor powered hoist.

4. (original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the lifting device comprises:

a manually operated chain hoist.

5. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first position is an installed position within a filter assembly in which fluid passes through the at least one filter disk operatively positioned relative to the center post member and the second position is a remote location exterior to the filter assembly where the at least one filter disk can be removed from the center post member and replaced with at least one new filter disk thereon.

6. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the attachment member ~~is~~ comprises:

an eyebolt assembly having threads associated therewith for engaging with corresponding threads formed on the first end portion of the center post member.

7. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the attachment member ~~is~~ comprises:

a swivel hoist ring assembly having threads associated therewith, the threads for engaging with corresponding threads formed on the first end portion of the center post member.

8. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the attachment member comprises:
a lifting eye welded to the first end portion of the center post member.
9. (canceled)
10. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the adapter member is configured to support at least fourteen (14) filter disks.
11. (original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the adapter member is configured to support at least fifty-six (56) filter disks.
12. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the adapter member has female threads formed therein for operatively engaging with corresponding male threads formed on the second end portion of the center post member.
13. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the adapter member further comprises:
at least one aperture formed therein for providing a flow passage through the adapter member.
14. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the at least one aperture is semi-circular.
15. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the at least one filter disk is operatively positioned relative to the center post member by sliding the at least one disk over the first end portion of the center post member.
16. (currently amended) A filter housing assembly comprising:
a housing having an interior chamber for processing fluid, a central axis and a bottom portion;
a base member having opposed upper and lower surfaces and at least an inlet portion and an outlet portion, the upper surface being operative to sealingly engage the bottom portion of the housing; and
at least one insert assembly sealingly engaged within the at least one outlet portion of the base member, the insert assembly comprising:
an upper surface which mates with the upper surface of the base member; and
a central aperture for sealing engagement with a ~~center post assembly~~ handling apparatus that has at least one filter disk engaged thereon, the central aperture providing a crevice-free flow path through the insert assembly when the ~~center post assembly~~ handling apparatus is disengaged therefrom ~~thereby facilitating the cleaning of the interior chamber such that, after the removal of the filter disk handling apparatus from sealing engagement with the bottom portion of~~

the housing, a substantially direct flow path for the fluid results thereby facilitating the cleaning of the interior chamber of the housing.

17. (original) The filter assembly of claim 16, wherein the upper surface of the base member has a raised portion along located peripherally and lower portion positioned adjacent to the insert assembly.

18. (original) The filter assembly of claim 17, wherein the upper surface has a transition portion between the raised and lower portion, the transition portion at an angle with respect to the lower portion.

19. (original) The filter assembly of claim 16, wherein the upper surface of the base member includes a raised portion located along the periphery of the upper surface and a central region, the raised portion engaging with the bottom portion of the housing and connected to the central region by a concave surface.

20. (currently amended) The filter assembly of claim 16, wherein the ~~center post assembly~~handling apparatus comprises;

a center post member having a first end portion and a second end portion;

an attachment member operatively engaged with the first end portion of

the center post member, the attachment member including means for connecting to the ~~center post assembly~~handling apparatus and disengaging from the at least one insert assembly; and

an adapter member, operatively connected to the second end portion of the center post member and supporting the at least one filter disk which is operatively positioned relative to the center post member, the adapter member sealingly engaging the central aperture of the insert assembly when the ~~center post assembly~~handling apparatus is in an installed position.

21. (original) The filter assembly of claim 20, wherein the adapter member further comprises:

at least one circumferential groove formed in an outer portion of the adapter member for receiving an o-ring and facilitating the sealing engagement of the adapter member with the central aperture of the insert assembly.

22. (original) The filter assembly of claim 21, wherein the adapter member further comprises:

at least one aperture formed therein for providing a flow passage through the adapter member when the center post member is in the installed position.

23. (original) The filter assembly of claim 22, wherein the at least one aperture is semi-circular.

24. (currently amended) A method for handling filter disks from an initial position to a second position such that the used filter disks are removed, the method comprising the acts of:

providing at least one filter disk;

~~operatively positioning positioned on the at least one filter disk onto a~~ handling apparatus, the handling apparatus comprising:

a center post member having a first end portion and a second end portion;

an attachment member, operatively engaged with the first end portion of the center post member and including means for facilitating the lifting of at least one filter disk from an initial position to a second position, wherein the attachment member has an outside dimension which is smaller than a central aperture formed in the at least one filter disk, thereby allowing the at least one filter disk to be slid over the attachment members such that handling apparatus is separated from the at least one filter disk by sliding the handling apparatus out from the center of the at least one filter disk; and

an adapter member, operatively connected to the second end portion of the center post member for supporting the at least one filter disk when the at least one filter disk is operatively positioned relative to the center post member;

attaching ~~a~~ a vertical lifting hoist device to the handling apparatus; and

vertically lifting ~~raising~~ the handling apparatus and the at least one filter disk; ~~and~~

relocating the at least one filter disk from the initial position to the second position; and

at the second position, sliding the handling apparatus out from the center of the at least one filter disk such that the handling apparatus is removed from the at least one filter disk.

25. (currently amended) An apparatus for handling filter disks, the apparatus comprising:

~~an elongated~~ center post member having first and second end portions;

~~an elongated~~ center post member, the attachment member providing means for facilitating the lifting of the handling apparatus from an installed position to a remote location; the installed position being when the handling apparatus is operatively positioned within a filter ~~housing~~ assembly and the remote location being a location exterior to the filter ~~housing~~ assembly, wherein the attachment member has an outside dimension which is smaller than a central aperture formed in the at least one filter disk, thereby allowing the at least one filter disk to be slid over the

attachment members such that apparatus is separated from the at least one filter disk by sliding the apparatus out from the center of the at least one filter disk;

an adapter member, operatively connected to the second end portion of the ~~elongated center post member, the adapter member~~ for supporting at least one filter disk when the at least one filter disk which is operatively positioned relative to the ~~elongated adapter post member; and~~

a lifting device, operatively connected to the attachment member, ~~for vertically raising~~ removing the handling apparatus from the filter assembly such that the at least one filter disk can be transported from the installed position to the remote location.

26. (original) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the lifting device comprises:
a motor powered hoist.

27. (original) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the lifting device comprises:
a manually operated chain hoist.

28. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the remote location ~~is~~ comprises:

a location where the at least one filter disk can be removed and replaced with a new filter disk.

29. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the attachment member ~~is~~ comprises:

an eyebolt assembly having threads associated therewith for engaging with corresponding threads formed on the first end portion of the elongated post member.

30. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the attachment member ~~is~~ comprises:

a swivel hoist ring assembly having threads associated therewith, the threads engaging with corresponding threads formed on the first end portion of the elongated post member.

31. (original) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the attachment member comprises a lifting eye welded to the first end portion of the elongated post member.

32. (canceled)

33. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the adapter member is configured to support at least fourteen (14) filter disks.

34. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the adapter member is configured to support at least fifty-six (56) filter disks.

35. (original) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the adapter member has female threads formed therein for operatively engaging with corresponding male threads formed on the second end portion of the elongated post member.

36. (original) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the adapter member further comprises at least one aperture formed therein, the at least one aperture providing a flow passage through the adapter member.

37. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the at least one aperture is semi-circular.

38. (currently amended) A filter assembly comprising:
a housing having an interior chamber, a central axis and a bottom portion;
a base member having opposed upper and lower surfaces and at least an inlet portion and an outlet portion, the upper surface being operative to sealingly engage the bottom portion of the housing;

at least one insert assembly sealingly engaged within the at least one outlet portion of the base member, the insert assembly comprising:

an upper surface which mates with the upper surface of the base member;
a central aperture for sealing engagement with the ~~a center post assembly~~ handling apparatus having at least one filter disk operatively positioned thereon, the central aperture providing a crevice-free flow path through the insert assembly when the ~~center post member~~ handling apparatus is disengaged therefrom thereby facilitating the cleaning of the interior ~~chamber~~ chamber; and -

at least one filter disk having a central aperture operatively formed ~~therein~~;
~~and therein wherein the~~

~~a center post assembly~~ handling apparatus ~~comprising~~ comprises;

a center post member having first and second end portions;
an attachment member operatively connected to the first end portion of the center post member, for operatively connecting and disengaging the ~~center post assembly~~ handling apparatus from the at least one insert assembly wherein the attachment member has an outside dimension which is smaller than a central aperture formed in the at least one filter disk, thereby allowing the at least one filter disk to be slid over the attachment members such that handling apparatus is separated from the at least one filter disk by sliding the handling apparatus out from the central aperture of the at least one filter disk; and

an adapter member, operatively connected to the second end portion of the center post member, for supporting the at least one filter disk when the at least one filter disk is operatively positioned on the ~~center post member~~ handling apparatus and for sealingly engaging with the central aperture, when the ~~center post member~~ handling apparatus is in the installed position in the housing.

39. (original) The filter assembly of claim 38, wherein the upper surface of the base member is downwardly sloped toward the insert assembly.

40. (original) The filter assembly of claim 38, wherein the upper surface of the base member includes a raised portion located along the periphery of the upper surface and a central region, the raised portion engaging with the bottom portion of the housing and connected to the central region by a concave surface.

41. (original) The filter assembly of claim 38, wherein the adapter member further comprises:

at least one circumferential groove formed in an outer portion of the adapter member for receiving an o-ring and facilitating the sealing engagement of the adapter member with the central aperture of the insert assembly.

42. (original) The filter assembly of claim 41, wherein the adapter member further comprises:

at least one aperture formed therein for providing a flow passage through the adapter member when the center post member is in the installed position.

43. (original) The filter assembly of claim 42, wherein the at least one aperture is semi-circular.